

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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R 090800Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1777

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0497

E.OM 11652: GDS

TAGS: PIN SO

SUBJ: SIAD REGIME'S INTERNAL POWER POSITION

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT SIAD IS CURRENTLY COMPLETING TWO-WEEK TOUR OF SOUTHERN REGIONS, A FOLLOW-ON TO HIS TOUR OF SIMILAR LENGTH IN NORTH AND CENTER IN JANUARY-FEBRUARY. NACT SIAD, UPON WHOSE PERSONAL ATTENTION SO MANY DECISIONS DEPEND, HAS TAKEN TIME FOR THESE TWO MAJOR TRIPS SHOWS IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO PERSONAL REVIEW OF LOCAL SITUATION AND TO ATTEMPT TO ENERGIZE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POPULACE. HIS WILLINGNESS BE ABSENT FROM CAPITAL FOR PROLONGED PERIODS ATTESTS TO CONFIDENCE HE HAS IN HIS POWER POSITION. THIS IS FOUNDED ON MULTI-FACETED CONTROL NETWORK WHICH WOULD APPEAR CAPABLE OF CONTINUING TO KEEP POPULATION UNDER TIGHT POLITICAL CONTROL, TO REGULATE MANY ASPECTS OF ITS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE, AND TO EXTRACT RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM IT. END-SUMMARY.

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2. MAJOR STRENGTH OF FOUR-YEAR-OLD SIAD REGIME HAS BEEN ITS

CONTROL APPARATUS, BASED FROM BEGINNING ON MILITARY AND TO LESSER EXTENT POLICE OFFICERS SERVING AS REGIONAL (14) AND DISTRICT (60) COMMISSIONERS, RELYING IN TURN ON WELL-DEVELOPED LOCAL POLICE APPARATUS) THESE REGIONAL AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS ARE ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION FROM AREAS AND TRIBES OTHER THAN THOSE THEY ARE ADMINISTERING, AND ARE SHIFTED PERIODICALLY TO AVOID BUILD-UP OF LOCAL LOYALTIES. THIS APPARATUS IS SUPPLEMENTED BY NATIONAL SECURITY SERVICE, WITH RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT TOP LEADERS AND ROOT OUT SUBVERSIVES AND

WITH ITS OWN CHAIN OF COMMAND FROM NATIONAL TO DISTRICT LEVEL.

3. IN ADDITION, A POLITICAL OFFICE, MANNED MOSTLY BY CIVILIANS AND REPORTING DIRECTLY TO PRESIDENCY, HAS BEEN FORMED WITH REPRESENTATIVES DOWN TO VILLAGE LEVEL. THESE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR LOCAL YOUTH CORPS NOW FOUND IN EVERY VILLAGE AND WHICH ASSIST IN MAINTAINING PUBLIC ORDER AND DISCIPLINE AND PERFORM VARIETY OF OTHER TASKS; FOR ORGANIZING WOMEN AND WORKERS; FOR MOBILIZING "VOLUNTARY" LABOR ON GOVERNMENT SELF-HELP PROJECTS; AND FOR FUNCTIONING OF LOCAL ORIENTATION CENTERS, WHERE POPULATION GIVEN LECTURES AND INDOCTRINATION COURSES, CAN BUY SCARCE FOREIGN IMPORTS SUCH AS FLOUR AND OIL, AND RICE, AND CAN GET ASSISTANCE IN MATTERS SUCH AS FINDING A JOB OR OBTAINING NIGHT-TIME TRANSPORTATION TO A HOSPITAL.

4. LAST SUMMER IT APPEARED THAT POLITICAL OFFICE WAS TO BE NUCLEUS OF AN EASTERN EUROPEAN STYLE POLITICAL PARTY WHICH WOULD GRADUALLY TAKE OVER AS COUNTRY'S CENTRAL ORGANIZING AND CONTROL MECHANISM. THIS, SOME FELT, WOULD GIVE REGIME FIRMER

ROOTS; IT FITTED BETTER WITH CONCEPT OF "SOMALI DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC"; AND IT PARALLELED SUCCESSFUL GOVERNING MECHANISM OF SOMALIA'S COMMUNIST FRIENDS. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THOSE PUSHING THIS HARDEST WERE LOCAL CIVILIAN IDEOLOGUES AND THEIR FOREIGN COMMUNIST MENTORS, PARTICULARLY ITALIANS. WORD WAS PASSED THAT MILITARY AND POLICY COMMISSIONERS WERE TO BE REPLACED BY CIVILIANS FROM POLITICAL OFFICE, AND THIS CHANGE WAS IN FACT MADE IN THREE DISTRICTS. FORMATION OF PARTY WAS WIDELY PREDICTED TO BE JUST AROUND THE CORNER, AND CIVILIAN MARXIST MOHAMED CONFIDENTIAL

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ADEN (MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION) WAS WIDELY TOUTED AS FIRST PRIME MINISTER.

5. BY LAST FALL, HOWEVER; IT BECAME CLEAR THAT REGIME HAD SHIED AWAY FROM THIS. SIAD CRITICIZED IDEOLOGISTS WHO KNEW NOTHING ABOUT PRACTICAL MATTERS, APPOINTMENT OF CIVILIAN DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS FELL OFF, AND DATE FOR FORMATION OF PARTY RECEDED INTO INDEFINITE FUTURE. RUMOR-MILL AT TIME PROBABLY CORRECT

IN ASCRIBING PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR THIS REVERSAL TO FEAR BY SIAD AND MILITARY OFFICERS OF SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL THAT THEIR POWER POSITION WOULD BE AFFECTED. OTHER FACTORS WERE PROBABLY THEIR DEEP DISGUST AT SOMALIA'S EARLIER EXPERIENCE WITH POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR DISTASTE FOR CIVILIAN RULE IN GENERAL. THEY MAY HAVE ALSO FELT THAT EXISTENCE OF A MARXIST-INSPIRED PARTY COULD INHIBIT THEIR HIGHLY PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO "SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM". THEY MAY HAVE FEARED THAT PARTY COULD BE A CHANNEL FOR SOVIET AND OTHER FOREIGN COMMUNIST INFLUENCE, OF WHICH THERE WAS ALREADY MORE THAN ENOUGH. THEY MUST HAVE REALIZED THAT THOSE ELEMENTS OF ELITE WHO FAVORED STRONG TIES TO ISLAM AND ARAB WORLD WOULD HAVE BEEN DUBIOUS ABOUT THIS FURTHER STEP TOWARD SOCIALIST/ATHEIST MODEL.

6. DESPITE THIS ABANDONMENT OF THE MORE AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR POLITICAL OFFICE, IT REMAINS VERY IMPORTANT INSTRUMENT FOR POPULAR MOBILIZATION AND USEFUL SEPARATE CHANNEL FROM PRESIDENCY TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES. TAKEN TOGETHER WITH CENTRALIZED COMMISSIONER SYSTEM AND NSS, IT PROVIDES SIAD WITH POWERFUL APPARATUS FOR CONTROL OF POPULATION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0497

7. COMBINATION OF FUNDAMENTAL POVERTY, ILL-CONSIDERED SOCIALIZATION MEASURES, AND WTRLD-WIDE INFLATION HAS CAUSED SEVERE ECONOMIC SQUEEZE (MOGADISCIO 1851). THIS HAS CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO

POPULAR DISSATISFACTION, ALREADY FUELED BY REGIME'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RESTRICTIONS AND BY RESENTMENT IN NORTH AT DOMINATION BY AND DISCRIMINATION IN FAVOR OF SOUTHERN PART OF COUNTRY. THIS DISSATISFACTION LIMITS ABILITY OF GOVERNMENT TO EXTRACT HIGH-LEVEL ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND POSITIVE LOYALTY FROM CITIZENRY. WE DO NOT RPT NOT HOWEVER HAVE ANY INDICATION OF GRASS-ROOTS ATTEMPT TO OVER-THROW REGIME, ANY CONTROL APPARATUS DESCRIBED ABOVE APPEARS SUFFICIENT TO CONTAIN ANY FORESEEABLE THREAT OF THIS KIND, ASSUMING ARMED FORCES STAY LOYAL AND TOP LEADERSHIP DOES NOT SPLIT.

8. WE KNOW LITTLE ABOUT FEELING WITHIN ARMED FORCES. MANY ARE STATIONED IN INHOSPITABLE BORDER AREAS. THEY ARE NOT IMMUNE FROM GENERAL POPULAR DISSATISFACTION WITH SHORTAGES AND HIGH PRICES AND THERE HAVE BEEN SOME REPORTS OF DEFECTION AND DISSENSION. CONFIDENTIAL

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EXAMPLE OF THEIR ETHIOPIAN COLLEAGUES COULD BE INFECTIOUS. YET OFFICER CORPS HAS SATISFACTION OF KNOWING THEY ARE RUNNING THE COUNTRY. THEY HAVE BEEN RECEIVING PROMOTIONS AND STEADY SUPPLY OF WEAPONRY FROM SOVIETS. THEY HAVE EXTERNAL "MISSION" OF DEFENDING SOMALIA AGAINST ETHIOPIAN "THREAT". THEY ARE PREPARING FOR DAY WHEN THEY MAY BE CALLED UPON TO RECLAIM SOMALI TERRITORY NOW UNDER FOREIGN FLAGS. FROM WHAT WE KNOW, THERE DOES NOT

APPEAR TO BE A CURRENT THREAT TO REGIME FROM WITHIN MILITARY.

9. OUR KNOWLEDGE OF TRUE STATE OF AFFAIRS WITHIN TTP LEADERSHIP IS VIRTUALLY NIL. IT WOULD BE ONLY LOGICAL TO EXPECT DISAGREEMENTS OVER DIFFICULT POLICY DECISIONS THAT HAVE HAD TO BE FACED OVER PAST MONTHS, AND WE SRI REPORTS OF DISPUTES, ESPECIALLY

OVER RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS AND ARAB STATES, AND OVER QUESTION OF THE PARTY. HOWEVER, IF THERE ARE IRRECONCILABLE DIVISIONS WITHIN RAQIMR#GROUP SO INTENSE THAT THEY THREATEN TO BRING DOWN REGIME, WE ARE UNAWARE OF THEM, AND WE MUST REMEMBER THAT SIAD HAS OVER PAST FOUR AND ONE-HALF YEARS SHOWN GREAT SKILL IN MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE UNITY OF RULING GROUP AND YIS PRIMACY WITHIN IT. KIRK

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED.

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